

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
PALM BEACH GARDENS REGULATORY OFFICE
4400 PGA BOULEVARD, SUITE 500
PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA 33410

Regulatory Division South Permits Branch

PUBLIC NOTICE

Permit Application No. 199402783(IP-KBH) DEC 02 2003

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: This district has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403), as described below:

APPLICANT:

Florida Department of Transportation

District Six Environmental Management Office

1000 N.W. 111th Avenue, Room 6101

Miami, Florida 33172

WATERWAY & LOCATION: The proposed roadway project is within a 20.4-mile portion of the US 1 South corridor from Key Largo to Florida City and is located in Monroe and Miami-Dade Counties. The US 1 South Project traverses the following waterways:

Lake Surprise OFW / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Jewfish Creek OFW / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Barnes Sound OFW / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Long Sound OFW / Everglades National Park Manatee Creek Manatee Bay OFW / Florida Keys National Park OFW / Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Canal C-111

DIRECTIONS TO THE PROJECT: To reach the project, proceed south from Miami on the Homestead Extension of Florida's Turnpike to the juncture where Card Sound Road meets US 1. This is the northern terminus of the project located at the north end of the "18-Mile Stretch" in Miami-Dade County. The southern end of the project begins in Monroe County on the island of Key Largo near Abaco Road at approximately Mile Marker 106.5.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE:

Begin Project - Latitude 25°N 10'15" Longitude 80°W 22'32" End Project - Latitude 25°N 26'05" Longitude 80°W 28'30"

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: The basic project purpose is to improve traffic safety.

Overall: The overall purpose of this project is to improve public safety along the US 1 South ("18-Mile Stretch") roadway by incorporating safety design standards, providing improved emergency evacuation and upgrading the bridge at Jewfish Creek.

PROJECT HISTORY:

The US 1 South Corridor between Key Largo and Florida City has been an on-going concern from a safety and emergency evacuation standpoint since the early 1960's. increasing traffic levels on this rural undivided facility have resulted in greater numbers of accidents with each passing year. Recent accident data collected from 1995 to 1999 indicate there have been 540 collisions along the corridor during this period, which also included 25 onsite fatalities.

The present project was initiated by the FDOT during a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study that began on June 29, 1988. A final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was developed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on March 27, 1992. Based on the FEIS recommended alternative (Alternative C-East), the total wetland impacts were estimated at 164.20 acres.

In May 1994, the Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies issued permits for construction of the upfront mitigation projects that the FDOT proposed as part of the compensatory mitigation for the US 1 South Project. Construction of the upfront mitigation sites was completed in December 1995.

On June 6, 1994, the FDOT initiated the permitting process for the roadway improvements with submittal of permit applications for a four-lane divided roadway with 12-foot travel lanes, a paved 22-foot median divided by a concrete Jersey barrier, and 10-foot paved inside and outside shoulders. In response to concerns raised by the public and a request from the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners, the applications were revised in 1995 to a three-lane divided roadway on a four-lane base. During the permitting process, the wetland impacts were reduced to 149.07 acres.

State permits for construction of the US 1 South Project were issued by the SFWMD following an extensive public hearing on June 11, 1997. The project's opponents subsequently filed a request for review of the SFWMD permits by the Governor and Cabinet acting as the Florida Land and Water Adjudicatory Commission (FLAWAC) under Chapter 373.114, F.S. FLAWAC deferred taking action on the request for review pending the outcome of the Federal permit proceedings, and the FLAWAC proceeding remains stayed.

On September 19, 1997, an interagency meeting was held between the FDOT, Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and FHWA at the DCA office in Tallahassee to discuss the USACE permit for the project. Following this meeting and subsequent coordination with the Governor's Office, the FDOT withdrew its USACE permit application. From November 1997 February 1999, the FDOT participated in a series facilitated discussions that also included representatives from federal, state and local agencies. Based on the the facilitated discussions and results οf recommendations of the June 2001 Florida Keys Hurricane Evacuation Study (by Miller Consulting, Inc.), the FDOT initiated revisions to the US 1 South master plan. These revisions focused on a modified design that would still achieve the project needs while minimizing direct and secondary impact concerns to the greatest extent possible. The current two-lane safety project (2LSP) is the result of this effort.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the policies of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which is the lead Federal agency for the project, the FDOT is currently preparing a Reevaluation of the FEIS.

 $\frac{\text{PROPOSED}}{\text{South}}$ WORK: The FDOT is proposing to improve the US 1 South (18-Mile Stretch) roadway from the current two-lane undivided roadway to a two-lane divided roadway with a

median barrier and improved shoulders. The proposed project includes 85.6 acres of permanent impacts and 20.1 acres of temporary impacts. The improvements will include the replacement of the Canal C-111 Bridge, the Jewfish Creek Bridge and the removal of the Lake Surprise Causeway. The new Jewfish Creek/Lake Surprise Bridge will be constructed as a high level fixed span bridge over Jewfish Creek joined to a low level fixed span bridge crossing Lake Surprise with access ramps to local businesses.

proposed roadway safety improvements involve The addition of inside and outside shoulders. The outside shoulders have been designed with shoulder base and lesser depth pavement, which would make them unsuitable as normal travel lanes. The northbound outside shoulder will be 12 feet in width (10 feet paved) and the southbound outside shoulder will be 10 feet in width (six feet paved). The project also provides a 14-foot wide median containing 2 six-foot wide inside shoulders and a two-foot wide concrete barrier, to preclude head-on collisions. The southbound outside shoulder, inside shoulders, and the median will require a width variation from FDOT design standards in order to reduce wetland impacts. The northbound outside shoulder will be constructed as a standard shoulder.

Included in the applicant's proposed work are several features that will re-establish hydrologic flow through the project corridor. North of Canal C-111, a total of 25 pipe culverts will be constructed to facilitate the movement of freshwater beneath the roadway. South of Canal C-111, a total of 16 box culverts and 3 bridges will improve the flow of brackish and marine water beneath the roadway within the estuarine reaches of the project. These hydrological features of the project will support the efforts of the USACE and the SFWMD under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to help restore historic water flows and levels throughout the region.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The existing wetlands within the project area consist of four basic types: sub-tidal wetlands, mangrove wetlands, emergent wetlands, and exotic dominated/shrub wetlands. The northern portion of the project traverses various freshwater emergent and exotic dominated shrub wetlands along the US 1 South corridor between Canal C-111 and Florida City. South of Canal C-111 the project corridor transverses mangrove, seagrass, and

non-vegetated bottom/open water habitats. The following table itemizes the acreages of impacts.

TABLE 1: Current Wetland Impacts (in Acres)

Habitat	Temporary Impacts Direct Impacts		Total
Estuarine			
Mangrove	5.50	33.70	39.20
	0.60	6.70	7.30
Seagrass Mud/Sparse Halodule	0.60	3.70	4.30
Non-vegetated Bottom	2.00	9.10	11.10
Non-vegetated Bottom Subtotal	8.70		
Freshwater			
Emergent	7.80	21.40	29.20
Shrub	2.40	3.80	6.20
Exotic 0.30		3.00	3.30
Open Water	0.90	4.20	5.10
Subtotal	pell water		43.80
Total Acres of Impact	20.10	32.40 85.60	105.7

MITIGATION: Upfront (phase one) mitigation for this project was authorized under DA Permit 199302368 and constructed in 1995. Under the upfront mitigation permits, a total of 385.22 wetland acres were restored and enhanced which resulted in an approved total of 203.02 acres of credit from the USACE and the SFWMD. Concurrent (phase two) mitigation will be completed during the construction of the roadway project and will include 38.23 acres of freshwater and marine mitigation.

The Phase One mitigation projects include the Harrison Tract within the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the C-109 Canal, the Roadside Spoil, and the C-111 East Canal mitigation sites:

Harrison Tract: To offset wetland impacts to mangrove wetlands, the FDOT restored 41.87 acres of mangrove habitat by removing upland fill; restored tidal flushing to 40.40 acres of totally impounded mangrove wetlands; and, enhanced 162 acres of mangrove habitat. The FDOT also backfilled the site's two borrow pits to improve water quality discharged from the deep pits and to create shallow ponds which function as foraging and feeding habitat for crocodiles and other marine organisms. For the restoration and enhancement

activities within the Harrison Tract, the FDOT received 70.37 acres of mitigation credit.

C-109 Canal: The C-109 project involved removal of fill material and backfilling the canal to restore 104.10 acres of freshwater emergent wetlands and 8.6 acres of tree island habitat. For the restoration activities within the C-109 Canal mitigation project, the FDOT received 112.70 acres of mitigation credit.

Roadside Spoil: The Roadside Spoil mitigation site was completed in early 1995 and the FDOT received 9.30 acres of freshwater emergent credit for the restoration of Everglades wetland habitat within a 1.5-mile long area adjacent to the US 1 corridor.

C-111 East: Within the Canal C-111 East mitigation project, the FDOT received 10.65 acres of mitigation credit for the restoration of non-vegetated bottom habitat in conjunction with enhancement of upland tree islands. The Canal C-111 East mitigation project has been successfully completed in accordance with the USACE and the SFWMD permit requirements.

The Phase Two portion of the mitigation plan includes concurrent mitigation projects that will be completed during the construction of the US 1 Corridor improvements. To compensate for impacts to seagrass habitat, the FDOT will restore onsite seagrass habitat by removing the Lake Surprise Causeway (5.60 acres) and the approaches to the Jewfish Creek Bridge (0.5 acres). A stagnant, impounded portion (4.00 acres) of Little Blackwater Sound will also be restored to establish historic seagrass habitat. This impounded area will be reconnected through the installation of box culverts under U.S. 1. Offsite at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station, the FDOT will restore seagrass habitat (17.6 acres) by restoring tidal connections to an impounded lagoon and planting seagrass. Additional freshwater emergent wetland habitat (10.34 acres) will be restored by Conservation Wildlife and Fish the Florida removing Commission Access Road and backfilling an adjacent canal. Under the Phase Two mitigation plan an additional 38.23 acres of restoration will be completed for the project.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Portions of this project are located in waters accessible to the Endangered West Indian manatee (Trichechus manatus). The Corps of Engineers, based on

review of available information and utilizing the manatee key dated January 2, 2001, has determined that the proposed work may affect the West Indian manatee and result in an adverse modification to critical manatee habitat. Should the Corps issue this permit, manatee awareness signs shall Protection Manatee Standard the and installed special added as Conditions be will Construction condition of the permit.

Portions of this project are located in critical habitat for the Florida Panther (Felis concolor coryi). The Corps of Engineers, based on review of available information and utilizing the panther key dated July 1, 2003, has determined that the proposed work may affect the Florida panther and result in an adverse modification to critical panther habitat.

A total of 12 other Federal listed threatened and endangered species were identified in the original FEIS as potentially occurring within the project corridor. These species include:

American Crocodile (Crocodylus acutus)
Wood Stork (Mycteria americana)
Snail Kite (Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus)
Key Largo Cotton Mouse (Peromyscus gossypinus allapaticola)
Key Largo Woodrat (Neotoma floridana smalli)
Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus)
Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow (Ammodramus maritime mirabilis)
Eastern Indigo Snake (Drymarchon corais couperi)
Schaus swallowtail butterfly (Papilio arisodemus ponceanus)
Loggerhead sea turtle (Caretta caretta)
Green sea turtle (Chelonia mydas)
Hawksbill sea turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata)

In 1991, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the Federal Highway Administrations determination of may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the 12 listed species. This determination was based on conservation measures included within the project's design to offset potential adverse impacts to endangered species that may reasonably be associated with the roadway improvements along the US 1 South corridor. The FDOT's compensatory measures that were incorporated into the project's design include four wildlife underpasses, three bridges, eight box culvert crossings, and the associated fencing required to channel wildlife movement to wildlife crossings beneath the

roadway corridor. In addition, the FDOT developed a series of Technical Special Provisions (TSPs) for the protection of endangered species during construction of the project. Since the Service's determination, the project scope has been reduced and the Phase One mitigation has been constructed. The applicant has also incorporated eight additional hydrologic box culverts south of Canal C-111 which function as additional crossings for endangered species. In light of the foregoing and the information available to the Corps of Engineers, the determination has been made that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the above listed species.

These determinations are being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: This notice initiates consultation on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The applicant has provided the following table of essential fish habitat impacts along the US 1 South corridor:

Temporary Impacts	Direct Impacts	Total	
5.50	33.70	39.20	
1.20	10.40	11.60	
2.00	9.10	11.10	
	28.20	38.7	
	81.40	100.6	
	5.50	5.50 33.70 1.20 10.40 2.00 9.10 10.50 28.20	

A seagrass survey was conducted along the corridor, which identified five species of seagrass observed in the survey grass (Thalassia included turtle These testudinum), Cuban shoal grass (Halodule wrightii), paddle (Halophila decipiens), manatee grass (Syringodium filiforme), and widgeon grass (Ruppia maritima). (Halophila Johnson's seagrass threatened Federally johnsonii) was not found in the project area. Seagrass areas are located in inter-tidal flats adjacent to US 1 South while dense beds occur within Lake Surprise and is that the The initial determination Barnes Sound. proposed action would adversely impact essential fish habitat. Our final determination relative to the project impacts to EFH and the need for any additional mitigation is subject to review by and coordination with the NMFS. The existing site conditions are based on studies supplied by the applicant and have not been field verified by the USACE.

HISTORIC RESOURCES: Project site information will be forwarded to the State Historical Preservation Board Office to be reviewed for the presence of any resources listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. A previous determination was made on June 4, 1990 by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of the Florida Division of Historical Resources that no significant archaeological or historical sites are recorded for, or considered likely to be present within, the project area.

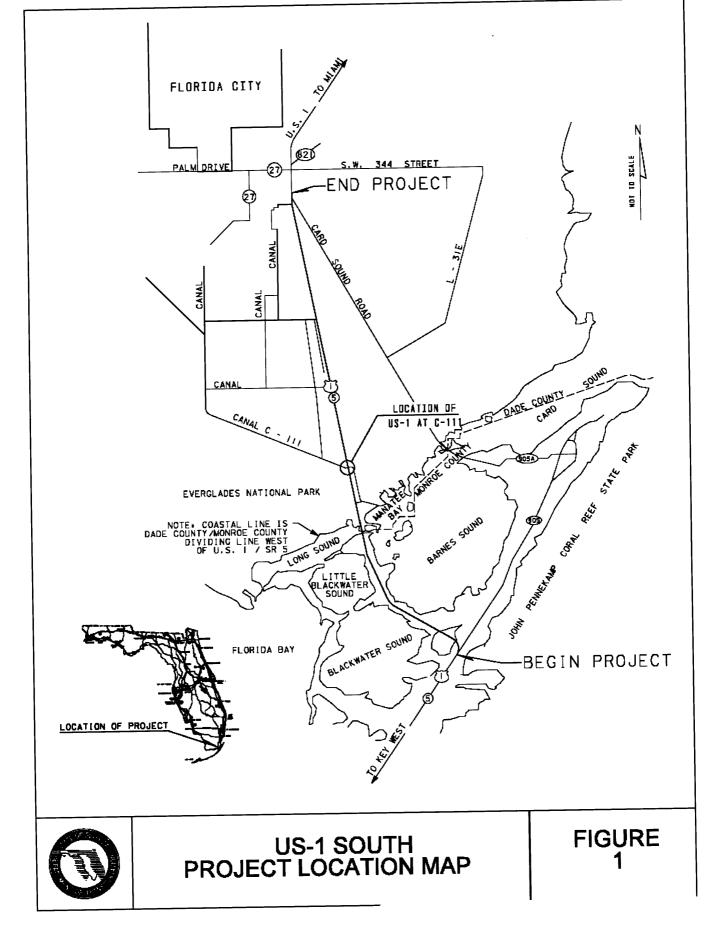
 $\frac{\text{NOTE}}{\text{information}}$: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified. A complete set of drawings is available in the District Office for review.

AUTHORIZATION FROM OTHER AGENCIES: The SFWMD is currently processing a request by the applicant to modify the SFWMD permits that were issued to the FDOT for the US 1 South Project in 1997.

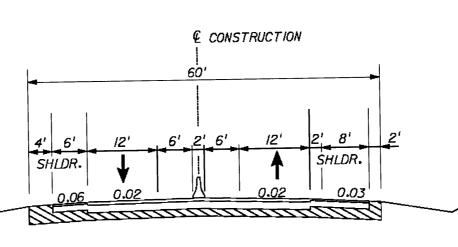
Comments regarding the application should be submitted in writing to the District Engineer at the above address within 30 days from date of this notice.

If you have any questions concerning this application, you may contact: Mr. Kenneth Huntington by telephone (561-472-3507), fax (561-626-6971), or via email at:

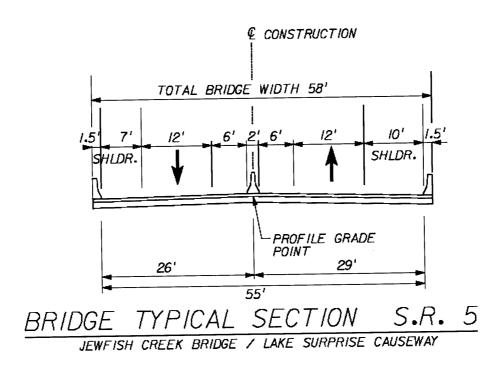
kenneth.b.huntington@saj02usace.army.mil



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ROADWAY TYPICAL SECTION S.R. 5



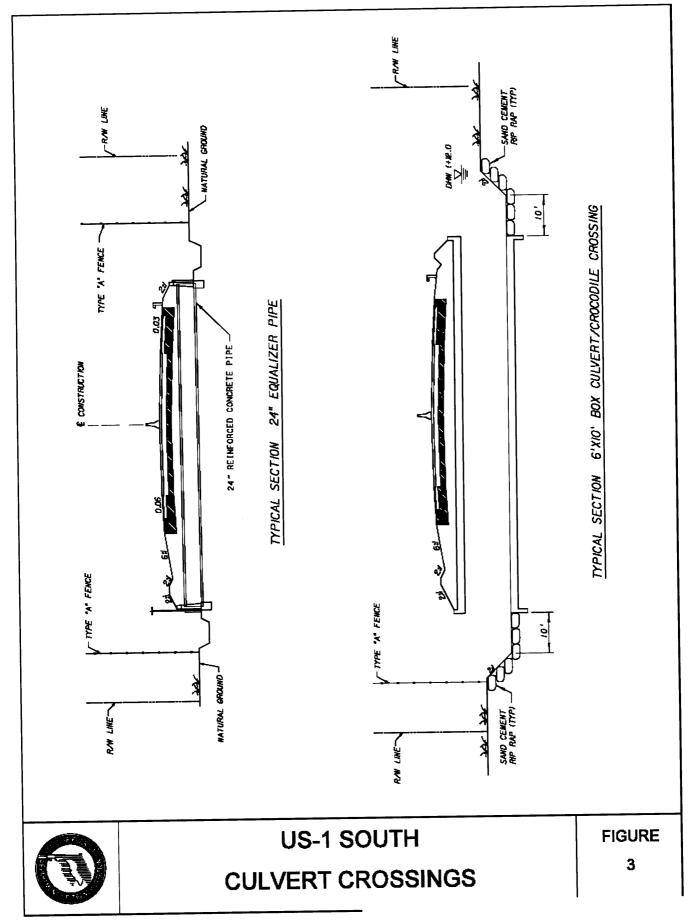


US-1 SOUTH TYPICAL SECTIONS 2-LANE SAFETY PROJECT

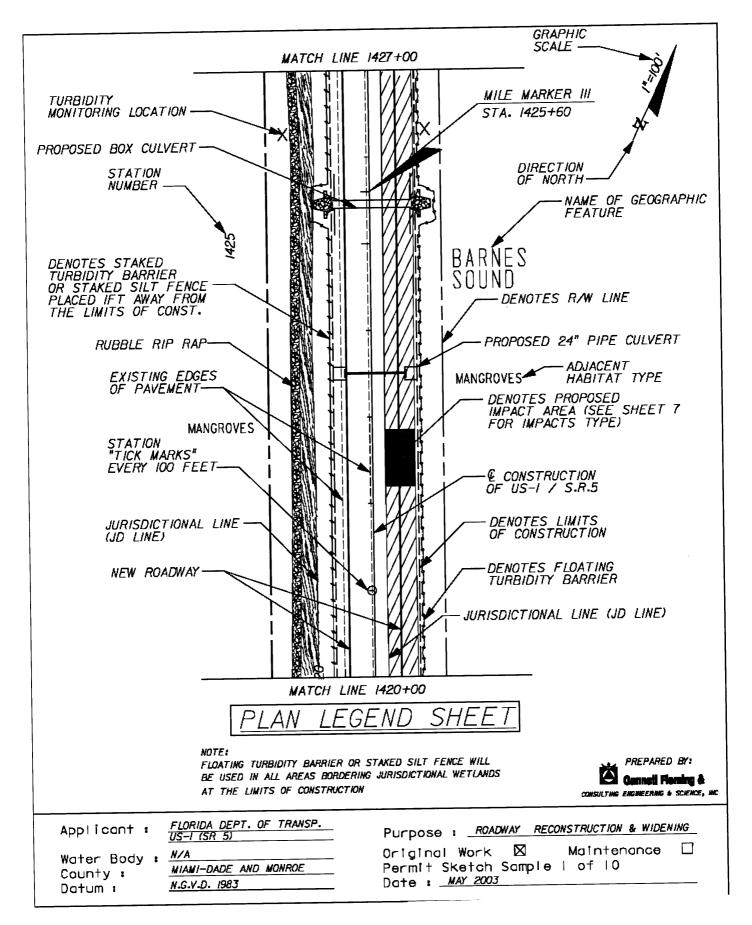
FIGURE

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783 Drawing Number 3 of 13



NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set, 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783 Drawing Number 4 of 13 Date: 11/24/03

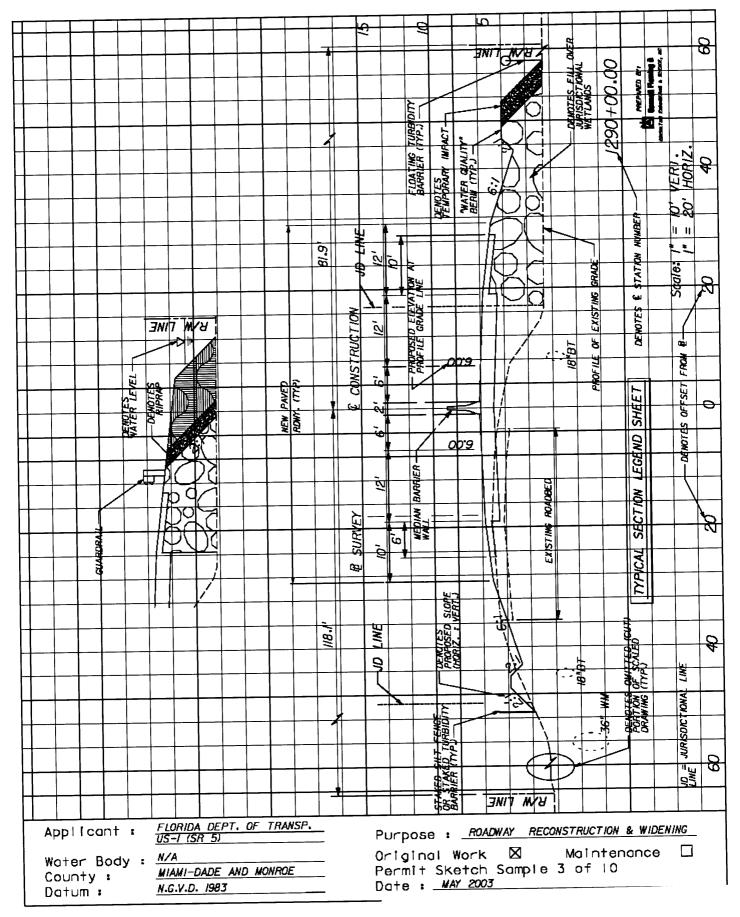
<u>LEGEND</u>

MP A	MILE POST		
WM V	NATER MAIN	RETA	AINING WALL
JD LINE:	JURISDICTIONAL LINE	□ □ <i>HY DF</i>	ROLOGICAL 24" PIPE CULVERT
-0-0-0-	FLOATING TURBIDITY BARRIE		
×	TURBIDITY MONITORING LOCA	TION	
• • • • :	STRUCTURAL PILING		
	EXISTING PAVEMENT		
	RIGHT - OF- WAY LINE		
	PROPOSED PAVEMENT		
	STAKED TURBIDITY BARRIER	OR STAKED SILT F	ENCE
1490	BASE/CENTER LINE OF CONS © 100 FT. INTERVALS	STRUCTION W/STATIC	DNING
	RUBBLE RIP RAP (FOUND O	N PLAN VIEW CROSS-	-SECTIONS)
	DREDGE (FOUND ON CROSS-	-SECTIONS)	TEMPORARY IMPACT
	FILL (FOUND ON CROSS-SEC	CTIONS)	AREA TO BE RESTORED
E	PROPOSED IMPA	ACT AREAS	5
	NON-VEGETATED BOTTOM		EMERGENT
	SEAGRASS		MANGROVE
3 45 47 7	OPEN FRESH WATER		SHRUB
	EXOTICS		MUD BOTTOM/ SPARSE HALODULE PREPARED BY COMMITTED TO SERVICE STATES OF THE PROPERTY & MARKET STATES OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PRO
Applicant: FLORI	DA DEPT. OF TRANSP.	Purpose : ROADWAY	RECONSTRUCTION & WIDENING
Water Body : N/A MIAMI	-DADE AND MONROE	Original Work D	Maintenance 2 of 10

NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete s
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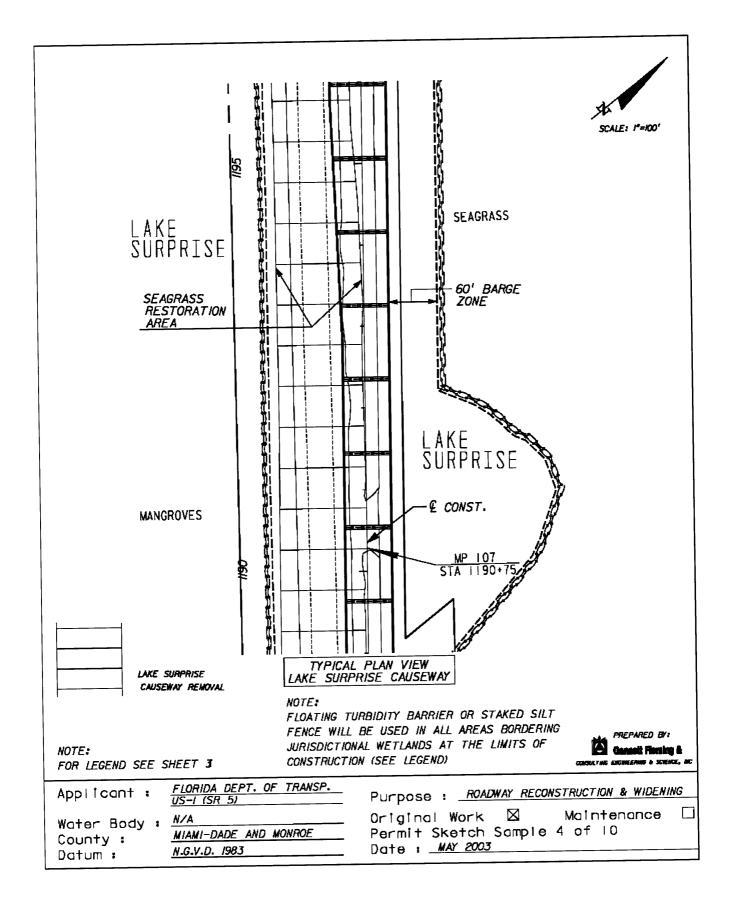
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
D.A. # 199402783
Drawing Number 5 of 13

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783 Drawing Number 6 of 13

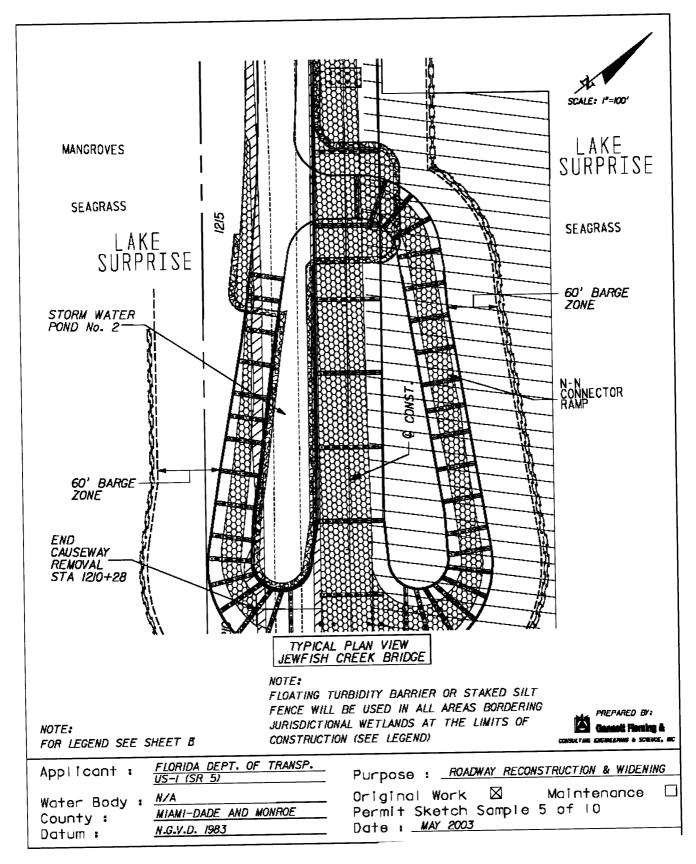


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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

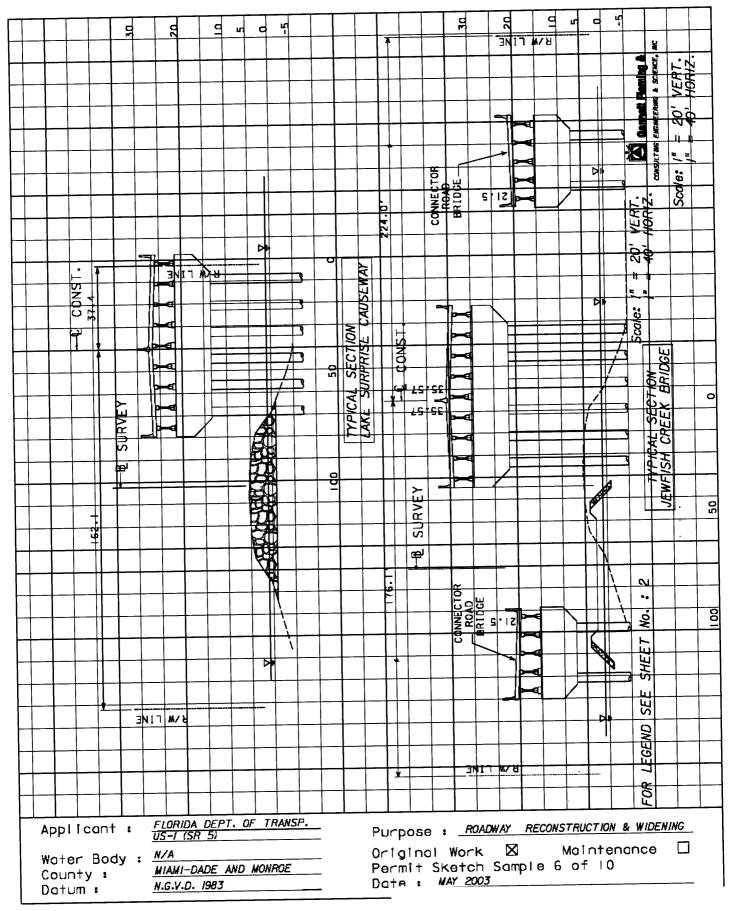
D.A. # 199402783

Drawing Number 7 of 13



NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set Drawing Number 8 of 13 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque Date: 11/24/03

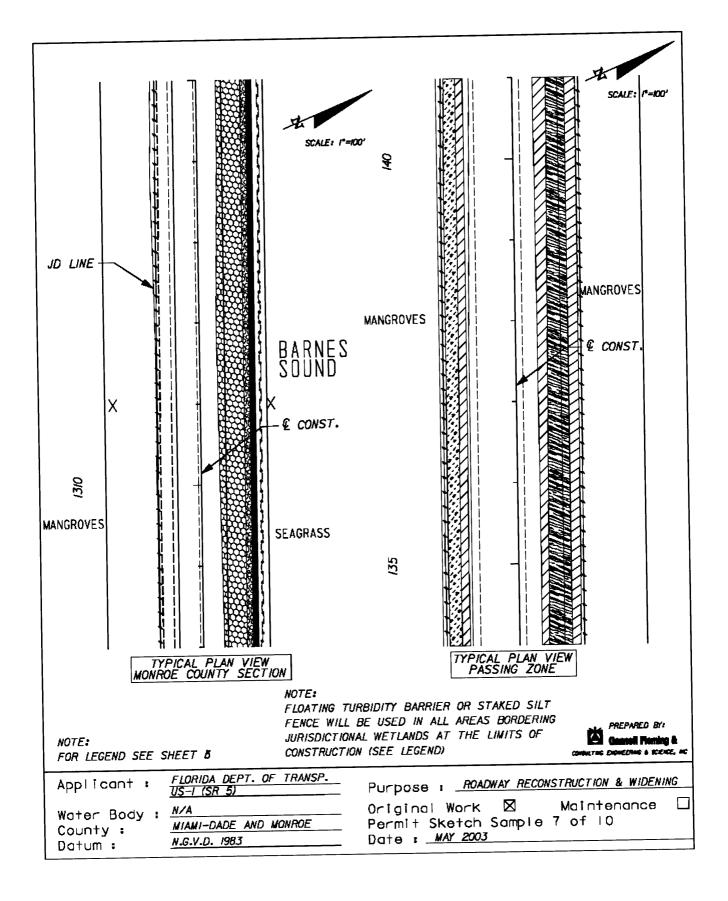
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783



NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque

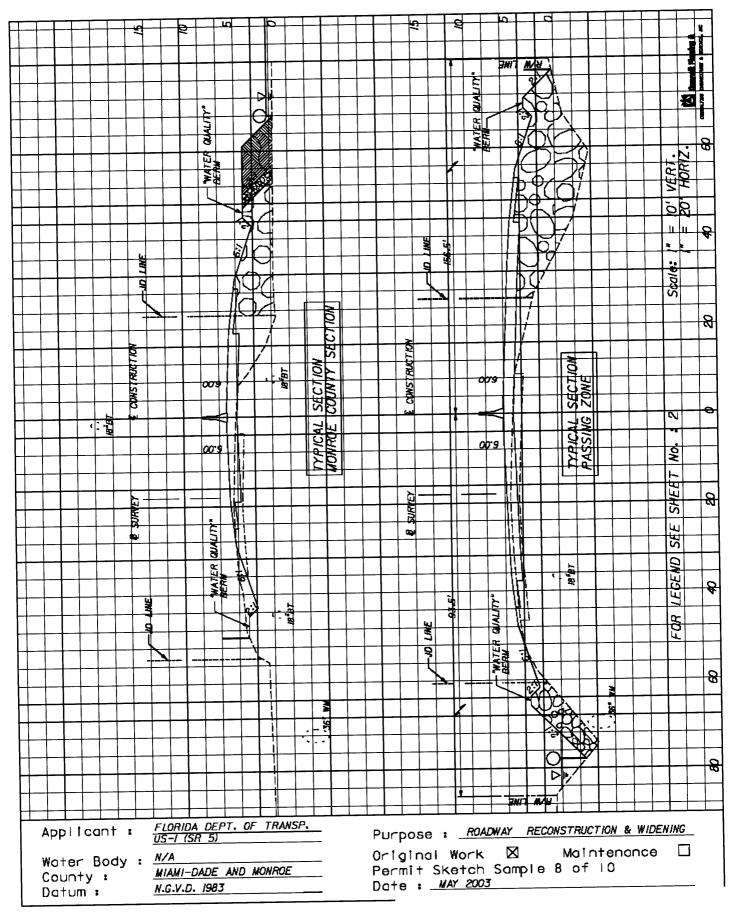
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783

Drawing Number 9 of 13



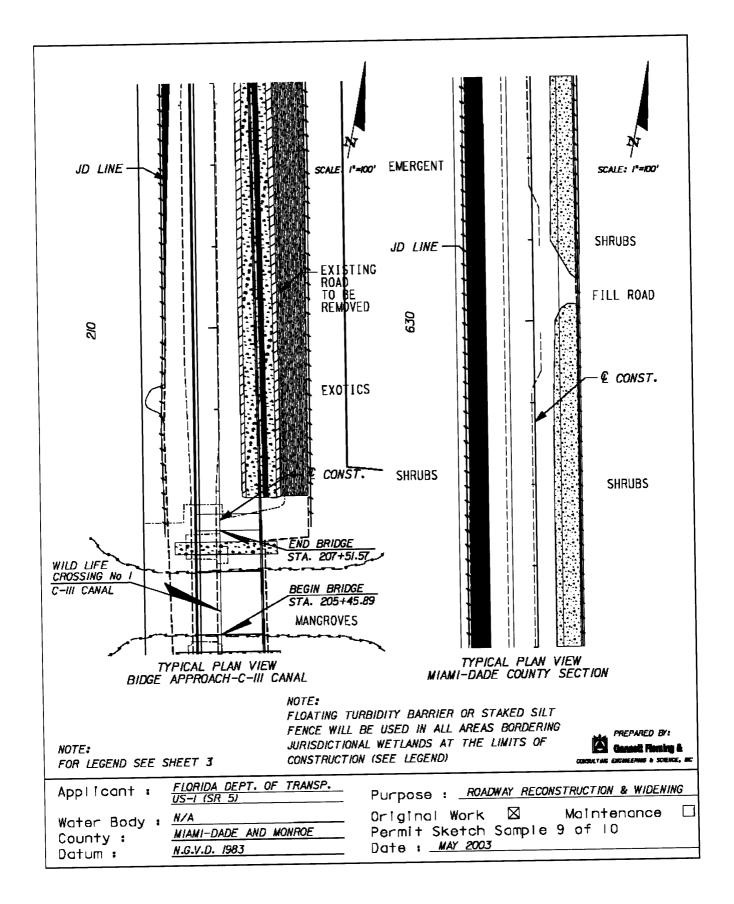
NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set, D.A. # 199402783 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque: Drawing Number 10 of 13

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque: D.A. # 199402783

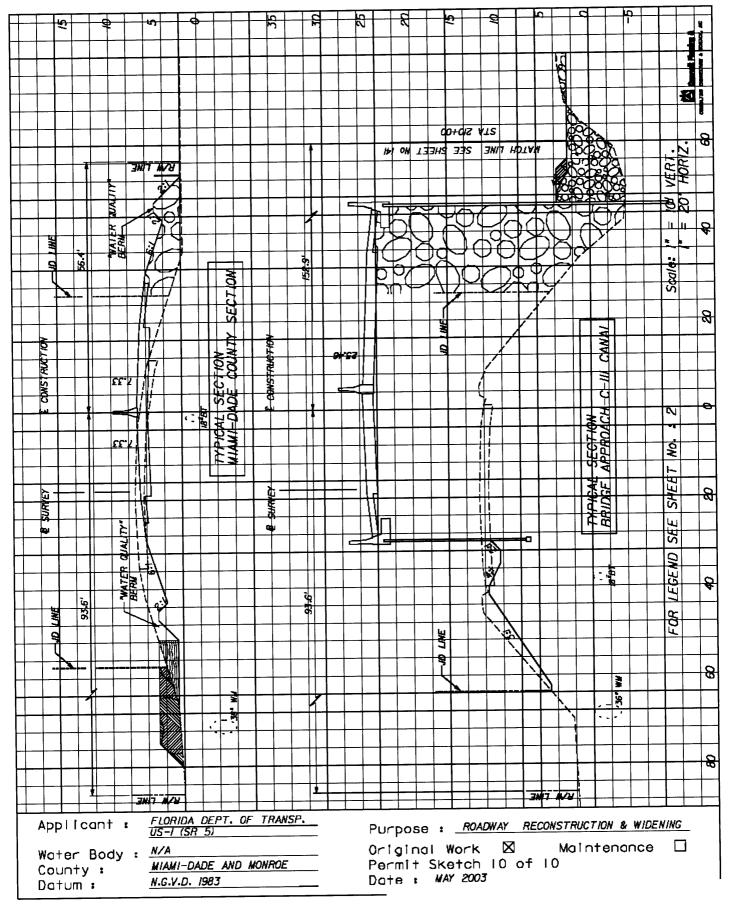
Drawing Number 11 of 13



NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783 Drawing Number 12 of 13

Drawing Number 12 of 1 Date: 11/24/03



NOTE: This is a sample permit sketch. A complete set 141 permit sketches, is available for review upon reque

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers D.A. # 199402783 Drawing Number 13 of 13

IMPACT ON NATURAL RESOURCES: Preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required. Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Services, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, environmental groups, and concerned citizens generally yields pertinent environmental information that is instrumental in determining the impact the proposed action will have on the natural resources of the area. By means of this notice we are soliciting comments on the potential effects of the project on threatened or endangered species or their habitat.

IMPACT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES: Review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places indicates that no registered properties, or properties listed as eligible or inclusion therein, are located at the site of the proposed work. Presently, unknown archeological, scientific, prehistorical, or historical data may be lost or destroyed by the work to be accomplished.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act of the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine, Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. A permit will be granted unless its issuance is found to be contrary to the public interest.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make or deny this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY: In Florida, the State approval constitutes compliance with the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan. In Puerto Rico, a Coastal Zone Management Consistency Concurrence is required from the Puerto Rico Planning Board. In the Virgin Islands, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources permit constitutes compliance with approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.

Chief, Regulatory Division